
**IMPLANTABLE MEDICAL DEVICE HAVING
ATRIAL TACHYARRHYTHMIA PREVENTION THERAPY**

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Field of the Invention

*This application is a continuation of 09/338,216, filed
June 22, 1999, now USPN 6,292,694*
The present invention is generally directed to an implantable

10 medical device. The present invention is more particularly directed to an
implantable medical device which provides atrial fibrillation prevention
pacing therapy to a heart upon detecting an interatrial conduction
disturbance predictive of a pathological atrial tachyarrhythmia.

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Background of the Invention

Atrial fibrillation is a common cardiac arrhythmia. Although not life-
threatening, it is associated with stroke and congestive heart failure.
Further, patients with atrial fibrillation can experience palpitations of the
20 heart and even dizziness. In short, atrial fibrillation can substantially reduce
quality of life.

While drug therapy for atrial fibrillation is available, many patients
either are, or become, refractory to such therapy. Drug therapy can also
cause undesirable side effects.

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Internal cardioversion of atrial fibrillation is also known. This
therapy, however, is not widely or commercially available.

External cardioversion of atrial fibrillation is often the last resort for
atrial fibrillation patients. However, this therapy generally requires a hospital
stay and can be traumatic.

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Atrial fibrillation is a progressive disease. In early stages it can be
paroxysmal in nature. Many patients with sick sinus syndrome also
experience or may develop paroxysmal atrial fibrillation. Research has

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